

Career Education for Jail Inmates

The citizens of Northwest Wisconsin request:

- **That the Department of Corrections fund career training for inmates at local county jails within Northwest Wisconsin.**

Recidivism among adult offenders occurs due to a lack of career aspirations and education and poor personal choices. Studies have shown that persons having a vocation are less inclined to repeat their mistakes and end up being incarcerated. Vocational education and training is needed to give these offenders the opportunity to become productive citizens in our community.

There are community colleges, technical colleges, and private schools able to provide trade and technology skills training, life skills education, and GED/HSED preparation in our communities. With available state funding, our counties would be able to provide employment skills to a population needing these opportunities the most. In working with community agencies, strong partnerships will be developed that encourage support and resource development for inmates seeking assistance with community reentry.

Additionally, educational programs could focus on issues related to successful community reentry for inmates; examples can include housing, financial management, family communication, decision-making, accessing resources related to job procurement or career development, connecting to community resources, self-management related to problem solving, conflict resolution, communication and coping skills that aid in the development of pro-social behavior.

It is important to note that this program would help identify available community and higher educational resources to achieve their GED, HSED, or enroll in area higher educational institutions. This would not affect current GED programs being offered within the counties, but rather complement them. It would also enhance the current programming being provided by UW-Extension offices, where applicable.

A pilot project funding this initiative could be a model for the rest of the State. Tuition, books, equipment, and supplies could be repaid by graduates of the programs and returned to the counties to be paid out for additional inmate training. Former inmates could be productive taxpayers and would be able to contribute to our society.

For more information contact:

Carrie Linder, Bayfield County Human Services Aging and Disability Services Supervisor

Telephone: (715) 373-6144

Email: CLinder@bayfieldcounty.org